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*Time analysis of Sanskrit plays.*—By A. V. WILLIAMS JACKSON, Professor in Columbia University, New York, N. Y.

## I. THE DRAMAS OF KĀLIDĀSA.

That courtly poet and polished critic of the sixteenth century, Sir Philip Sidney, in his scholarly defense of poetry, rebukes the dramatic writers of his day for their violation of the classic unity of time on the stage. He complains of their making heroes fall in love, marry, beget children, live their life, and die—and all within ‘the two hours traffick of the stage.’ Little did he think that a Shakspere was so soon to arise as the highest authority for defying all rules that bind a poet in too classic fetters. Still less could he have dreamed that more than a thousand years before his day there had bloomed and flourished in India a drama whose master playwrights, when occasion suited them, had blown to the winds many a stringent rule for the unity of time, and had done this with true dramatic effect. Hardly could Sidney have fancied that Sanskrit rhetoricians themselves had likewise made strictures on the compositions of their own dramatic authors, and had laid down certain general rules on the observance or non-observance of the unity of time which they had deduced from national masterpieces. For this reason it is not without interest to examine the plays of the early Hindu theatre in regard to this matter of the unity of time.

Some material with reference to the unities on the Indian stage has been gathered by others. Wilson’s *Theatre of the Hindus* furnishes a number of references; Lévi’s *Théâtre Indien* naturally yields more; and short discussions or scattered allusions are found elsewhere. The best of these is by Windisch. This latter scholar in his well-known monograph, *Der griechische Einfluss im indischen Drama*, pp. 46–49, devotes three pages to a brief treatment of the special subject of the unity of time when he is making a general comparison of the Hindu stage with the Greek. The notes in the present article, however, have been made from material gathered independently of Windisch’s brief discussion and without referring to it; but when the results were reached

his investigations were consulted. This made the research more interesting, and attention will be called below to those details in which there is a substantial difference from his deductions.

Although I have made some examination of the other Sanskrit dramatists in regard to this matter of time, the investigation in the present paper is confined to Kālidāsa. There may be some differences of opinion with regard to some of the deductions, as based on matters of detail, and if errors be found, it is hoped that they will be corrected. Some passages with time allusions, moreover, may have been overlooked, but if so, other scholars will no doubt aid in supplementing this collection. In such a matter we need only recall that it is sometimes not difficult to add a new time reference even to so complete a work as Daniel's *Time Analysis of the Plots of Shakspere's Plays* (New Shaksp. Soc. Trans., 1877-79). A glance at Daniel's treatise on the English dramatist will show that there may be work to do on somewhat similar lines for the Indian plays. With these words of introduction we may turn to the Hindu Shakspere, Kālidāsa, and take up his three extant plays, the *Mālavikāgnimitra*, *Çakuntalā*, and *Vikramorvaçī*.

The editions and translations of Kālidāsa are numerous; but for convenience the references and citations are made throughout to the text published in the series of the Nirnaya-Sāgara press. Pischel's *Çakuntalā* and Bollensen's *Urvashi* have also been consulted in difficult passages. The annotated editions of the *Vikramorvaçī* by Shankar P. Pandit (Bombay, 1879; 2d ed. 1889), by G. B. Vaidya (Bombay, 1894), and by M. R. Kale (Bombay, 1898) have given considerable help. The latter two have also translations. Mention may likewise be made of the English rendering of the *Mālavikāgnimitra* by Tawney (Calcutta, 1875—also in a second edition), the German versions by Weber (Berlin, 1856) and Fritze (Leipzig, Reclam series), and an Italian version by Cimmino (Napoli, 1897). Among the various translations of the *Çakuntalā* notice may be taken of the rendering by Edgren (New York, 1894), as it is easily accessible, and likewise of those of the *Vikramorvaçī* by Wilson, Bollensen, Fritze, Foucaux, Vaidya, and Kale. [The edition of *Abhijñānaçakuntala*, by Kale, Bombay, 1898, arrived after the present article was in type.—Proof sheet addition.]

Before proceeding to discuss these plays in detail, however, we may say a few words on the Sanskrit drama as a romantic

drama, in contrast to the early classic Greek. Its romantic character is that which makes the Hindu productions more comparable with the New Attic comedy and with the Elizabethan drama. The Indian plays have much freedom in regard to the unity of time, for the action of a Sanskrit play may comprise events that cover an entire year or even a number of years. It is true that there are certain limitations, and these are to be found duly recorded in the canons which the Sanskrit rhetoricians have deduced. These limitations are worth citing so far as they relate to the act and to the play as a whole. The *Sāhitya-Darpana* § 278 (ed. Roer and Ballantyne; transl. Pramāda-Dāsa Mitra) lays down the rule for the act (*aṅka*), that "it should not contain events of more than one day." Furthermore (§ 306), "a business extending beyond a year should be comprised within a year." To this the comment is added: "As has been said by the sage, 'all that was done in a month, or even in a year, should be performed in a separate Introductory Scene (*aṅkaccheda*), but never what extends beyond a year.' So the destruction of Virādha, etc., parts of the story of Rāma's dwelling in the forest, though it extended over fourteen years, may be hinted, without opposition (to the above dictum), to have occupied a year or any portion of it, such as a couple of days," etc. This latter point must be kept in mind, as reference will be made to it hereafter. Finally the canon reads, § 307, "What was done in a day, but in a whole day, is to be intimated by means of the Introductory Scene apart from the main act." See also the similar references to the *Bharata Nātyaçāstra*, 18. 22, and the *Daçarūpa*, 3. 33, noted by Lévi, *Théâtre Indien*, p. 58, and by Windisch, p. 46. These are the only time limitations which the Sanskrit playwrights observed, and having noted these we may proceed to the time analysis of Kālidāsa's dramas in detail.

### 1. Mālavikāgnimitra.

Plot of the play in brief : The King falls in love with a fair maid and wins her hand before five days have elapsed—the time within which a certain *agoka* plant is said in the play to have bloomed. Number of acts, five.

**Act I.**—(1) The king despatches an army to overthrow the hostile king of Vidarbha, whose quick defeat is afterwards told in the fifth act (pp. 11, 88 *Nirṇaya-Sāgara* edition). (2) A plan is arranged for a trial of skill between the pupils of two rival

teachers of dancing and acting. The performance is about to begin at the close of the Act; a drum gives the signal (cf. allusions to *mṛdaṅga*-, *mudāṅga*-, *muraja*, pp. 21, 22, 23).

Time of the first act, part of the forenoon of a day.

**Act II.**—No interval separates this act from the preceding; the king goes directly from the audience hall to the music room (p. 25). The dancing scene occupies most of the act, and noon is supposed to be reached at its close (cf. allusion to the time of day, *upārūḍho madhyāhnah*, p. 33, and the reference to the hour for bathing and dining (*bhoṣṇavelā*, p. 33). As the king leaves the stage he promises to witness the exhibition of the rival teacher Haradatta on the ‘morrow’ (*cvo*, p. 33).

Time of the second act, continuation of the same forenoon.

*Slight Interval?* A very slight interval, hardly more than a day, may be assumed to separate Act iii. from Act ii., if we may judge from the Prelude, or *praveçaka* of Act iii., and if we also recall that the king had promised to witness the rival performance on the ‘morrow.’ From the dialogue in the Prelude between the attendant and the maid in waiting we learn that the king has decided the dancing contest in favor of the lovely Mālavikā, so that there has been some gossip on the subject (cf. *kolīnam*, p. 37); moreover, Mālavikā is observed to be pining ‘in these days’ (*imesu diahesu*, p. 37), and the king himself is deeply in love with her (pp. 38, 53).—Windisch, in his short note, does not place any longer interval than the next day between these acts.

**Act III.**—This particular act gives the key for the time of the rest of the play. The lovelorn king appears upon the stage; the queen has already become suspicious, and she is exceedingly (*ahiam*, p. 39) watchful of Mālavikā. The day itself is the beginning of the spring season, and on this day a ceremony is to be performed which shall cause the beautiful *āçoka* tree to blossom (pp. 38–41). According to an ancient Indian superstition this is accomplished when some handsome woman touches the tree with her foot. As the chief queen has sprained her ankle by falling from a swing (*dolā*, p. 43), she sends her hand-maid, the fair Mālavikā, to the garden to perform the rite. ‘She adds to her command a delightful promise that she will bestow some great boon on the girl ‘if the plant flowers within the interval of five days from the time’ (*jadi so pañcarattabhbhantare kusumam dainṣedi*, p. 43). This is the allusion to the ‘five

nights,' which, as shown by the sequel in Act v., gives the time for the play.

Time of the third act, part of one day.

*The next day?* Only a slight interval, if any, separates Act iv. from Act iii. The Vidūshaka at the opening of Act iv. tells us that the second queen, Irāvatī, had called upon the chief queen 'yesterday' (*hio*, p. 64); this visit apparently was made directly after the episode in the garden, as she had overseen the king making love to the girl. We also learn from the Vidūshaka that the queen still suffers from the injury to her ankle (*ruakkanta-calāñam*, p. 64).—I find that Windisch also places Act iv. on the day directly after Act iii.

**Act IV.**—There is no break in the development of this act itself. At its close we are told that 'even before the completion of the fifth day' (*apuṇye evva pañcaratte*, p. 87) the *açoka* tree is covered with blossoms, and the good news is carried to the queen.

Time of the fourth act, part of a day.

**Act V.**—No interval of any account separates this act from the preceding. Mālavikā is discovered to be a princess in disguise, and as a reward to her for the blossoming of the *açoka* within the five days she is made the third wife of the king. At the same moment the king also receives the news of his signal victory over the monarch of Vidarbha (cf. Act i.).

Time of the fifth act, duration of the action itself.

Summary of the duration of the action of the Mālavikāgnimitra.

Act i.-ii., part of one day.	1
[Possible slight interval, but hardly more than a day.]	
Act iii., part of one day.	1
[Only a slight interval, if any.]	
Act iv., part of one day.	1
Act v., perhaps the next day.	1
The whole time occupied by the action is thus about a week.	

## 2. Çakuntalā.

Plot of the play in brief : King Dushyanta falls in love with Çakuntalā ; they accidentally become separated, but are united some years afterwards in the presence of their young son. Number of acts, seven.

**Act I.**—King Dushyanta arrives at the hermitage of the Sage Kanva; the latter at the time, however, is absent on a pious pilgrimage (cf. pp. 21–22 and Act iv.). The Sage's foster daughter, Çakuntalā, receives the king, who immediately falls in love with her.

Time of the first act, part of a day.

**Act II.**—This act opens on the morning after the first act (cf. *hio* ‘yesterday,’ when the king saw Çakuntalā, p. 56; and *ajja vi* ‘also to-day’, p. 56). A jesting allusion of the Vidūshaka implies that the king is making provision for something of a stay at the hermitage, (cf. *gahidapāheo*, p. 76). The hermits themselves gladly invite him to remain for ‘some days’ (*katipayarāt-trai*, p. 79). Directly after this, however, the king receives word from his queen-mother requesting his presence at the royal city ‘on the fourth day’ (*cautthadiāhe*, p. 81) to attend a sacrificial festival. We are not told that he actually went within this allotted time, but it is in accordance with the general action of the play.

Time of the second act, part of the next day after the first act.

*Very slight interval.* A very slight interval seems to occur between Act ii. and Act iii. This is implied, for instance, in the allusion to Çakuntalā’s having pined with love from the very first sight of the king (cf. *padhamadamsanādo*, p. 90; *jado pahudi mama darṣaṇapaham ādo*, p. 94), and the allusion to her ‘daily wasting away’ (*anudiahām kkhu parihiāsi aṅgehim*, p. 92) so that her appearance is much changed (p. 92, etc.). The king likewise ‘in these days’ (*imāīm diahāīn*, p. 96) has grown emaciated from sleeplessness, and he confesses that ‘night by night’ (*nīci nīci*, p. 96) he lies awake, and has grown so thin that the bracelet—as is often said in Sanskrit of lovers—slips down his arm without being checked by bowstring scars which come from hunting. In spite of this seeming to imply a longer interval, it can hardly be conceived that any considerable lapse of time is supposed to intervene; the union of the king with his beloved is hardly likely to have been long postponed, and the allusions to ‘several days,’ and ‘on the fourth day,’ as already noted in Act ii., speak rather for the brevity of the interval.—Windisch’s memorandums, I find, do not allow for any interval here, but he places Act iii. on the next day after Act ii. [But Kale assumes a slight interval as I do.—Proof sheet addition.]

**Act III.**—This act brings about the union of Dushyanta and Çakuntalā, and in itself the duration of the business is short, and rapidly passes from the time when the heat of the day is not yet over (*anirvāno divasah*, p. 107; *ātāpe*, p. 108)—unless this statement by the king be an exaggeration—to the ‘close of the day’ when ‘night is at hand’ and ‘the evening oblation’ is about to begin (cf. *parinādo diaho*, p. 111; *uvatthiā rañī*, p. 110; *sāyantane savanakarmani*, p. 113).

Time of the third act, part of an afternoon towards dusk.

*Interval.* An interval of some months elapses between the third act and the fourth—or perhaps rather between the Prelude of Act iv. and that Act itself. In this Prelude we learn that the king has married Çakuntalā by the Gandharva rites, and with the permission of the hermits he has departed after giving her a ring as a marriage pledge, and is now at home in the royal capital (pp. 115–116). It seems best thus to place the interval between the Prelude and the Act itself, for in the Prelude the king has apparently just departed, and the abstracted Çakuntalā, for some inattention, is cursed by the angry Rishi Durvāsas; nor has her foster-father yet returned. When the Act itself begins, the curse has had time to take effect (*duvvāsaso kobo*, p. 124), the king has forgotten her, and has ‘not even in that long time sent a letter’ (*etiassa kālassa lehamettam pi na visajjedi*, p. 124; cf. also pp. 118, 260–261); Çakuntalā, moreover, is in a delicate condition, as she is with child (*ābaññasattam*, p. 124), and the signs of pregnancy are plainly evident (cf. *idānīm āpannasattvā*, p. 165, *abhivyaktasattvalakṣaṇām*, p. 169). [It is interesting now to find that Kale, p. 22, takes a similar view. He says: “an interval of about a month and a half separates the fourth Act from the third, there being a distance of about fifteen days between the Act itself and the Vishkambhaka.”—Proof sheet addition.]

**Act IV.**—The opening of Act iv. is at dawn (*prabhātum*, p. 121; *sujjodae*, p. 128). The venerable Kaṇva has just returned from his pilgrimage. He knows that his foster-daughter is with child by the king (p. 128, cf. pp. 165, 169), and determines to send her to him ‘this very day’ (*ajja evva*, p. 125; *ajja evva*, p. 126; *yāsyaty adya*, p. 132). By the time that the sun has risen Çakuntalā starts on her journey to the palace (*yugāntaram ārūḍhah savitā*, p. 146).

Time of the fourth act, from before dawn until the sun is well up.

*Interval—very slight.* Only a very slight interval, probably not more than two or three days, is to be allowed for the journey to the city. It can hardly be longer than that, since the hermitage was not very far from the town, as we know from ‘the fourth day’ in Act ii. (p. 81), and also because the king, on bidding adieu to Çakuntalā, had promised that his messenger should bring her to join him in the palace before as many days had elapsed as there were syllables in his name—Dushyanta—inscribed on the ring he gave her (p. 209). It was this ring that Çakuntalā unfortunately lost on the way to the palace (p. 172).

**Act v.**—The action in this is continuous and rapid, and its duration in time corresponds to the act itself. Çakuntalā and her attendants arrive at the palace and are received, but she is rejected by the king because his mind is clouded by the Sage’s curse, and Çakuntalā has not the enchanted ring to restore his memory. Immediately upon her repudiation she is carried away to heaven by a shining apparition.

Time of the fifth act, duration of the action itself, i. e. part of a day.

*Interval of several years.*

An interval of several years must be assumed to elapse at some time after Act v., in order to account for the fact that the child who is about to be born of Çakuntalā at the close of this act is old enough in the seventh act to appear on the stage dragging a lion’s cub by the ears. There is some difficulty, however, at first in deciding whether the interval might not have been regarded by the poet as elapsing between Act vi. and Act. vii. rather than here. This is of course allowing that the poet had some intention in the matter, and did not simply content himself with conveying a general impression of time passing—which is not impossible. A study of the play tends to show that there are convincing grounds for placing the interval just here.

Up to the present point, for example, we know that Çakuntalā’s rejection by the king was due to the influence of the Rishi’s curse and to her having unfortunately lost the ring of reunion. The ring itself has just been recovered when the Prelude to Act vi. opens. A fisherman had found it in the maw of a fish he had caught. How long the ring may have been supposed to have lain in the fish’s belly is not alluded to in the play. It is natural to suppose that the time was considerable, as this

interval would allow for the birth and growth of the child and would make the restoration of the king to his senses still more dramatic. The presence of the Prelude (*praveçaka*), moreover, is in favor of this, as the Prelude is a conventional device also to indicate the lapse of time at a given point. But there are still stronger grounds, as given below, for not separating Act vi. and Act vii., which would weaken the structure dramatically, and for allowing the break to be made here.

The only ground that might be taken against such an interpretation is that in Act vi. the two maidens who have been sent to the king's palace a 'few days' before (*kati dihāin*, p. 193) seem to speak of the 'gossip of Çakuntalā's repudiation' (*çakuntalāpratyādeçakāulinām*, p. 194) and the news of the recovery of the ring (*angulīaadamsanām*, p. 194), as if they were items of recent interest. But this is no real argument after all. The mere fact of the girls' having been at the palace but 'a few days' does not militate against the possibility that the ring may equally well have been found some years after the repudiation of Çakuntalā: the incident would recall the old gossip. For this reason also, as well as for the others given below, it seems best to place the interval here, where the Prelude would also imply that it is to be placed, rather than later on. Windisch, I see, likewise places the interval at this point. [Kale, however, does not.]

**Act VI.**—Having assumed now that a long interval has elapsed, we may note that the action opens once more at the time of the vernal festival (cf. *vasantotsave*, p. 192). The king, who has regained his senses on seeing the ring, now suffers distress and sleeplessness from grief because he had repudiated Çakuntalā (p. 194 seq.), of whom he has drawn a portrait from memory (p. 194 seq.). The act closes with the assurance that it will be 'not long' (*airena*, p. 222) before he shall embrace his beloved, and at this instant he is summoned to heaven to do battle in behalf of the gods against the demons.

Time of the sixth act, apparently part of a day.

**Act VII.**—The closing act of the play is the one which brings about the reunion of the hero and heroine in the presence of their little boy, who is quite a lad. The two grounds alluded to above for not allowing any interval, more than a day, to separate Act vii. from Act vi. may be taken up at this point. In the first place, Act vi. closes with the promise of a speedy meeting between

Dushyanta and Çakuntalā (*aireṇa*, p. 222). But there is more than that. The remark of Dushyanta himself to his charioteer Mātali, in this act, is the second reason. The text runs : ‘Good Mātali, in my eagerness to fight against the demons, when I was ascending into the sky yesterday (*pūrvedyur*, p. 234), I did not take note of the path to heaven.’ This ‘yesterday’ conveys the idea that the battle was swiftly despatched and the victory quickly gained, which is natural in divine warfare. For this reason, as mentioned above, we are forced to place the time of Act vii. on the day after Act. vi., and to allow the interval for the birth and growth of the child to stand only after Act vi. This, as already stated, makes the dramatic structure of the close of the play more compact.

Some attempt might be made to locate the interval in question between Act vi. and Act vii. instead of after Act vi., but it could hardly be carried through successfully. It might be argued, for example, that the warfare against the demons lasted longer, and that *pūrvedyur* ‘yesterday’ is used only in a general way to represent events that cover a long period as having occurred in a short time, in accordance with the canon of the *Sāhitya-darpana*, cited above. A slight color of possibility might furthermore be given to such a claim inasmuch as a variant reading in Pischel’s footnotes (p. 149), from manuscripts SNIy, offers *pūrvam dūram* instead of *pūrvedyur*. This would mean ‘when I formerly mounted into the far-off heaven,’ and the ‘formerly’ might be interpreted with latitude enough to cover some lapse of time for the war and the birth of the child. But such an attempt could hardly meet with approval, on the grounds brought forward above, and an hypothesis of an interval here is not so consistent with the text and the idea of the play.

Time of the seventh act, part of the next day.

Summary of the duration of the action of Çakuntalā.

Act i., part of one day.	1
Act ii., part of the next day.	1
[Interval—very slight.]	
Act iii., part of an afternoon towards dusk.	1
[Interval—a number of months.]	
Act iv., part of a day, from before dawn until the sun is high.	1
[Interval—probably two or three days.]	

Act v., part of one day.	1
[Interval of several years—see discussion above.]	
Act vi., apparently part of a day.	1
Act vii., part of next day—see discussion above.	1

Thus, the first four acts cover somewhat less than a year. Several years have elapsed by the beginning of the seventh act. This interval is to be placed between Act v. and Act vi. Duration of the action, hardly less than a half dozen years.

### 3. *Vikramorvaṣī*.

Plot of the play in brief : King Purūravas rescues the nymph Urvaṣī, who has been carried away by the demons, and he wins her love. The story of their accidental separation later and of their reunion in the presence of their son, who is now about twelve years of age, forms the subject of the last two acts of the play. Number of acts, five. The time analysis of this drama, however, is more difficult than that of the other two; an interval of over a dozen years, perhaps thirteen, must elapse during its action.

**Act I.**—King Purūravas rescues Urvaṣī from the demons ; she and her attendant nymphs safely return to the sky (pp. 1–25). From the allusions to the plants, the pleasure garden, and the advent of spring, in this and the following act, the vernal season is intended to be represented (cf. such allusions *ladāvidave*, p. 23 ; *vasantāvadāra*, Act. ii., p. 36, etc.).—I notice that Kale, p. 25, concludes that “the events in the first act seem to refer to the first or second day of Caitra, as the creepers have not yet fully resumed their vernal beauty.” He reads that interpretation into the comparison *grīr ivārtavī*, p. 20, and similarly the image *visāhāsahido via*, p. 29.

Time of the first act, part of one day in the early spring.

*Interval of a few days?* It is not quite certain that any appreciable time elapses between Act i. and Act ii., but we have some reasons for thinking that a few days may be supposed to have separated them. In the first place, the queen notices the king’s abstracted demeanor, and her attendant devises a scheme to discover the cause (pp. 26–27). This is not important in itself, but it may be combined with an allusion made by the Vidūshaka in Act iii. (which follows directly after Act ii.) to the king’s

having grown appreciably thinner (*jahā parihāmānehim angehim sohasi*, p. 67). We may further add to this, Urvaçī's allusion to an occurrence at the time of her rescue by 'then' (*tadā*) in some editions (e. g. Pandit, p. 36; but not in the *Nirnaya-Sāgara*, p. 38, nor in Bollensen, p. 22), as well as the king's words to her, 'when you were seen before' (*drṣṭapūrvā*, p. 47) and the maid's 'from the time that' (*jado....tado*, p. 26-27)—all of which seems to allow possibly for a few days having intervened before Urvaçī and the king were again together. On the contrary, it may be urged that these allusions are not of importance for defining the time, and that the enamored Urvaçī would probably have taken the earliest opportunity to return to earth to see the king.—I find that Windisch, p. 47, does not allow for any interval here, but places Act ii. on the day after Act i. On the other hand, Kale, p. 26, believes in the interval. He thinks (as noted above) that the opening of the play is to be laid at the beginning of the month Caitra (see above), and he is of the opinion that "the description of the moonrise in the third act evidently refers to the fourth day of the dark half of a month (probably Caitra), which is a fasting day and on which the moon appears like a *khandamodaka*. About a fortnight's interval seems to have gone between Urvaçī's first meeting with the king and her second visit to him. The events of the third act immediately succeed those related in the previous act." He judges (p. 25) that "the business in the first three acts, each of which describes a day's events, is accomplished in about twenty days."

**Act II.**—The opening of this act is apparently in the forenoon after the king has come from the hall of justice (cf. *dhammāsanagado*, p. 26), and the time is about 'the sixth watch' when the sun is 'in the middle of the sky' (cf. *vyomamadhye ṣaṣṭhe kāle*, p. 30). This is ordinarily understood to mean the hour about noon (see also the discussion in the notes to the edition by G. B. Vaidya, p. 110); but M. R. Kale (p. 88) argues in favor of making the time as early as 9 A. M. The succeeding action in this scene is rapid: Urvaçī descends from heaven to meet Purūravas, but she is shortly afterwards summoned back to the sky by the voice of a divine messenger who calls upon her to take part in a drama that is to be played 'to day' (*adya*, p. 50) before the gods. At this juncture the Vidūshaka makes allusion to the fact that the hour for the midday 'bath and meal' (*nhānabhojanam*, p. 58) has arrived; the king expresses surprise

that 'half the day is already gone' (*katham ardham gatam divasasya*, p. 58).

Time of the second act, hardly more than an hour.

**Act III.**—The Prelude to this act opens apparently on the same day as Act iii., merely allowing time for the play in heaven meanwhile to have been performed, if we are to conceive of celestial hours as corresponding in this particular case to the earthly time of day. The act itself begins towards dusk, when 'the close of the day' is at hand (*divasāvasāna*, p. 63), when the king's 'twilight-devotions' are accomplished (*sañdhyaśākāryam*, p. 63), the peacocks begin to drowse, the torches and lamps are brought, and the moon appears.

There are several reasons for believing that the action takes place on the same day as the events of Act ii., and that no appreciable interval separates these acts. In the second act, for instance, the celestial play was to be played 'to-day' (*adya*, p. 50) when Urvaśī was summoned to heaven about noon; and the Prelude of Act iii. seems to treat the play as something that has just taken place, and the two pupils of Bharata apologize for having overstaid 'the holy ablution time' (cf. *ahiseavelā*, p. 62) of their sage preceptor. This would carry on the noontide impression of the preceding act, and allow for nightfall to approach after the Prelude and at the beginning of the act itself, as duly noted above. From the fact, moreover, that Urvaśī during the heavenly play was cursed to descend to earth, it is likely that she would seek to join Purūravas as soon as possible, and she appears on the stage near the beginning of Act iii., shortly after the king has come in. For that reason also no interval. A further ground for making the events of Act iii. fall on the afternoon of the same day as Act ii. is that Purūravas, although sad, has managed to pass the day, doubtless because he has seen Urvaśī, but he dreads the night (*katham nu rātrir gamitavyā*, p. 64), which may imply that a night has not yet intervened.

By the middle of the act itself the moon is well up, the queen prepares the rite of propitiatory worship of her husband, and the nymphs Urvaśī and Citralekhā have been some time by the king's side, so that the Vidūshaka jestingly inquires whether they have been present ever since sunset (*kadham iha jjeva tumhānam atthamido sūro*, p. 80). By the end of the act it is time for retiring (cf. *gehappavesa*, p. 83), and Purūravas and Urvaśī are at last united.

Time of the third act, from evening until bedtime, and apparently on the same day as Act ii.

From what has been shown we may assume that the first three acts follow each other directly, with the possible slight pause between Act i. and Act ii. The time of the year is the spring. It must now be observed that at the close of Act iii., when Citralekhā bids Urvaçī farewell, she must go and serve the Sun in ‘the summer season which follows upon the spring’ (p. 81), and she enjoins upon Purūravas to treat Urvaçī in such a way that she may not pine for heaven. This same service on the Sun is referred to at the beginning of Act iv., but there are some difficulties connected with the entire allusion, according to the commentators, as noted below.

*Interval of twelve years or more?*

An interval of more than a dozen years must be assumed to have elapsed at this point in order to account for the presence of the son of Purūravas and Urvaçī in the fifth act as a youth of twelve years of age or more. This lapse can only be placed here, as no appreciable interval can be shown to separate the fourth and fifth acts. Further discussion of the point is reserved for a paragraph below.

**Act. IV.**—The preceding act closed with the union of Purūravas and Urvaçī and with the departure of Citralekhā to take her turn as attendant upon the Sun (p. 81). At this point, therefore, we find the *praveçaka* or Prelude of Act iv. brought in, like other introductory scenes of this kind, to indicate a lapse of time.

The hour when the Prelude scene opens is supposed to be shortly before dawn (*udaâhivassa bhaavado sujjassa*, p. 90); Citralekhā has just returned from her period of divine solar service. How long this service is supposed to have lasted is not told, and here we must pause for discussion. Usually such attendance is understood to represent a month; but from what follows it is plain that Kālidāsa, at this point in his drama, wishes to convey the impression that a considerable lapse of time has taken place. Has he therefore used invention? Recent commentators, like Pandit (p. 92–94), Vaidya (p. 162), and Kale (p. 125), draw attention to the fact that Citralekhā’s name does not occur in the list of nymphs whose duty it is to serve the Sun; they also point out that even if she were to take her friend Urvaçī’s place in the list, the service during the summer season is ordinarily assigned

to Menakā and Sahajanyā, both of whom appear in our play. On critical grounds, therefore, they conclude that Citralekhā's term of attendance on the Sun is an invention of the poet's imagination. If this be true, and if Kālidāsa has created an office for Citralekhā out of his own fancy, we are equally entitled, in the same critical way, to go further and believe that he invented the fiction and colored it with an express purpose. This object was to make the service on the Sun seem to be of long duration and the corresponding period of Citralekhā's separation from Urvaçī, during the latter's sojourn on earth, match this in length of time. In the very opening lines of the Prelude, Citralekhā emphasizes how greatly she misses Urvaçī (p. 86), and her distress is the greater because she has discovered, by divine intuition, the calamity that has befallen her beloved friend 'in these days' (*imesuṁ divaseṣuṁ*, p. 87).

The calamity was this, and it is worth recording as some inference as to time may be drawn from it. According to her story, Urvaçī and Purūravas had left the capital of Pratiṣṭhāna, and had gone to the Gandhamādana forest for a pleasure trip after the king 'had laid the weight of the affairs of state upon his ministers' (*amaccesu nihidakajjadhuraṁ*, p. 87). We are not told how long this was after the marriage; but time must have elapsed in the forest, since we are informed that while in the wood the king chanced to cast a glance at a semi-divine maiden, which made Urvaçī so intensely angry that she forthwith abandoned the king. Wandering in her jealous rage, she unwittingly entered the charmed Kumāra park, whose sacred precincts women were forbidden to enter, and she paid the fatal penalty of being transformed into a vine. According to one of the Purāṇa legends she remained fifty-five years in this condition, but no such time, of course, is implied in the play. The Prelude only tells us that the frenzied king roams about seeking 'day and night' (*ahorattam*, p. 89) for his darling in the forest; but the comforting assurance is added that 'such admirable persons are not to experience misery long' (*na . . . ciram*, p. 89), although the king in addressing Urvaçī afterwards refers to it as 'a long separation' (*ciraviyogam*, p. 118).

At this point in Citralekhā's story the fourth act itself begins. The action is unbroken, and it is devoted to the somewhat too prolonged lyrical lamentation of Purūravas, who is hopelessly seeking his lost beloved. The season is the opening of the rainy

period which follows directly after the heated term of summer (cf. *mehodaena*, p. 89; *jaladharasamayam*, p. 93, etc.), and the frenzied lover wanders through the forest in quest of the nymph until accidentally he lights upon the ‘jewel of reunion’ (*samga-maṇio maṇi*, p. 119). This talisman restores Urvaṣī to her true form and unites the lovers, who proceed at once to the capital of Pratiṣṭhāna.

The duration of the act itself is continuous, and seems to occupy a day at the beginning of the rainy season. A single moment out of the time of the separation of the lovers during their forest sojourn is chosen as a type of the rest. This is in harmony with the *Sāhitya-Darpana* canons for bringing the events of a longer period into a briefer compass. The time of the lovers’ separation, as noticed above, may have been considerable; the time of their forest sojourn must have been long. Beside the king’s allusion at the close of the act to ‘long separation’ (*ciraviyogam*, p. 118), Urvaṣī herself likewise says ‘it is indeed a long time since we left Pratiṣṭhāna’ (*mahanto kkhu kālo amhānam paith-thānado niggadānam*, p. 119); and at the beginning of the fifth act the Vidūshaka furthermore refers to the king’s having been absent from the city for a long time (*cirassa kālassa*, p. 121).

Time of the fourth act, supposed to be one day in the rainy season.

**Act v.**—No interval divides this act from the foregoing, in which Purūravas and Urvaṣī had started for the royal city. The present act, as closing the drama, brings before the happy pair their youthful son Āyu, who has already passed through the ‘first stage of his education and is now ready to enter upon the second’ (*usitam tvayā pūrvasmīn ḥārāme, dvitīyam adhyāśitum tava samayaḥ*, p. 132), ‘being fully able now to wear armor’ (*sām-padaṁ kavacāruho saṁvutto*, p. 131). The youth is prepared as heir-apparent to assume from his father the duties of the state, but he still retains enough of his childish forest love to beg to take with him the peacock (p. 132) which has been his favorite companion in the lonely hermit grove.

Enough has been given to show that in the last two acts Kālidāsa sufficiently indicates in a general way the long lapse of time which must have taken place after Act iii. That is all that a dramatic poet can be asked to do. The critic who tries to make too minute search into the matter will often be baffled by the lack of details which the poet does not choose to give. Thus

these two acts, for example, do not tell us at what moment in their married life Purūravas and Urvaṣī became separated by the nymph's being transformed into a vine, nor is there a direct statement as to how long she remained so. Again, we do not know whether the entire length of the years that elapsed after Act iii. was supposed to be spent in the forest, or whether the lovers lived part of the time in the palace. It seems more likely that Kālidāsa intended to convey the idea that the whole time was passed in the forest. It must have been twelve years or more. But was Citralekhā all this time serving the Sun? This is probably what Kālidāsa meant us to believe, if any period be implied; and the suggestion offered above to interpret this as a piece of invention employed as a dramatic device to give an impression of the transition of time will explain away any objections that may be made on this point, such as those raised by Vaidya, pp. 191-192, where several difficulties in time are discussed.

But beside these allusions to the transition of time, there is one other that conveys the impression, if we are quick enough to catch the reference (noted by S. Pandit, p. 122 [135]; Vaidya, 191; Kale, p. 147). The king is surprised to find he has a son by Urvaṣī, because he never recalls having been absent from her 'except on the occasion of the Naimisha sacrifice' (*anyatram naimiseyasattrād*—for such is the better reading and not *animis̄yā* 'celestial nymph,' as the *Nirṇaya-Sāgara* edition has, p. 126). It was during this very sacrifice that the child was born and placed by its mother in a hermitage to be brought up. So far as the poet gave the matter any thought, he probably imagined the nymph to have joined the king again after this and after his having finished his ritual ceremony. The episode of their misunderstanding and of Urvaṣī's transformation into a vine followed later. There is no real necessity, as Kale points out (p. 147), for claiming that the Naimisha sacrifice is actually supposed to have occupied a dozen years. But if it did, we may then agree with Shankar Pandit (p. 122 [135]), and Vaidya (p. 192), that Kālidāsa is simply taking advantage of a poet's privilege and passing over a dozen years in imagination, but is giving an "appearance of reality" to this interval (as Pandit observes) by mentioning the sacrifice.

If these latter points be rightly taken, we may have in Kālidāsa something like what has been called Christopher North's 'two

clocks' in Shakspere. Shakspere, it is claimed, often uses allusions or references to accelerate or retard the action at will. At one moment he seems to give it speed ; at another he throws in some hint to hold it back or to convey the notion of a lapse of time. He adroitly plays tricks on us before our eyes ; we do not notice the inconsistency in the lapse or non-lapse of time until we study the play carefully and find out how we have been deceived. So it is with Kālidāsa. The allusion in the first two acts to the spring and the reference at the close of the third act to Citralekhā's service in summer upon the Sun, as well as that in the fourth act with its reference to autumn, all give the impression of a direct sequence of the seasons. And yet we know from the fifth act that there must have been an interval of a number of years between the third and the fourth acts. The invention of Citralekhā's summer attendance and the reference to the Naimisha sacrifice are but parts of Kālidāsa's extensive apparatus, which he never could have imagined that students would take the trouble to examine into microscopically. But having done so, we are ready now to summarize.

Summary of the duration of the action of the *Vikramorvaṣī*.

Act i., part of one day.	1
[Interval—certainly not long, perhaps a week or two.]	
Act ii., midday of one day.	
Act iii., afternoon and evening of the same day.	1
[Interval of 12 years or more.]	
Act iv., indefinite, but condensed into a single day in the rainy season.	1
Act v., part of one day—apparently the next day.	1

Thus, Acts i., ii., iii., cover part of a month in the spring time. An interval of twelve years or more elapses. Acts iv. and v. comprise two successive days.

In conclusion, we may say that Kālidāsa employs numerous time allusions for dramatic purposes and with dramatic effect ; a vivid imagination like his must have followed the time of the action of his events in their general outlines, but study leads me to believe that he probably did not pay much more attention to minute details in the matter of time than did Shakspere. The

Sanskrit drama and the Elizabethan stage resemble each other with regard to the unity of time. The five acts of Kālidāsa's *Mālavikāgnimitra* are comprised within about a week ; the action of Shakspere's Romeo and Juliet likewise covers about the same length of time. On the other hand, as in the Cymbeline and the Winter's Tale, years elapse between the first and last acts of the *Cakuntalā* and the *Vikramorvagī*. A Kālidāsa and a Shakspere, despite the objections which a critic may raise, allow the hero and the heroine to meet and fall in love at the opening of the drama and to have their son appear as a well grown youth at the close of the play. Āyu and Sarvadamana are the Guidериус and Aviragus of the Hindu stage; and it has been worth while, owing to the likeness to Shakspere, to enter into the workshop of Kālidāsa's mind and to see in detail what use he made of time allusions in his plays.